

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 02540 161422Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00 OTPE-00 FCC-01
INR-10 NSAE-00 OC-06 USIA-06 COME-00 BIB-01 OMB-01
TRSE-00 L-03 /047 W
-----007287 170221Z /15

R 161322Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8707
INFO AMCONSUL BUKAVU POUCH
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

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DEPT ALSO FOR AF/EX

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETEL, CG, US
SUBJECT: STATUS OF GOZ DEBT TO ATT

REF: A) STATE 001830, B) 77 KINSHASA 11020, C) 77 STATE 229946

1. SUMMARY: OFFICIALS OF ZAIRIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS AGENCY ARE WORKING TO BRING PRESSURE ON CENTRAL BANK TO PAY ATT DEBT IN ORDER TO HAVE FULL TELEPHONE SERVICE RESTORED BETWEEN ZAIRE AND USA. END SUMMARY.

2. OFFICIALS OF ZAIRIAN NATIONAL OFFICE OF POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS (ONPTZ) HAVE PREPARED A REPORT ON THE ATT PROBLEM FOR THE STATE COMMISSIONER OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION, WHO WILL SOON PRESENT THIS REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WITH A PROPOSAL THAT THE COUNCIL SOLICIT THE AMOUNT OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE NECESSARY FROM THE CENTRAL BANK TO PAY THE ATT DEBT. ONPTZ OFFICIALS AGAIN ASSURED EMBOFF THAT ONPTZ HAD SUFFICIENT ZAIRES ON HAND TO PAY THAT DEBT BUT IT COULD NOT GET THE ZAIRES CONVERTED TO DOLLARS.

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3. DIRECTOR OF TELECOMMUNICATION OPERATIONS AT ONPTZ, CIT. NSIALA, TOLD EMBOFF THAT NUMBER OF TELEPHONE CALLS BETWEEN ZAIRE AND U.S. HAD DROPPED SHARPLY SINCE JANUARY 16 WHEN ATT STOPPED RECEIVING CALLS FROM ZAIRE UNLESS THEY ARE MADE COLLECT (REF A--AF/EX PLEASE TAKE NOTE). HE CLAIMS THAT MOST OF THE CALLS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE FOR OFFICIAL

OR BUSINESS PURPOSES AND THAT ATT DECISION TO LIMIT SERVICE TO CALLS "SENT PAID/RECEIVED COLLECT" WILL HURT COMMERCIAL AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN THE LONG RUN. IN CONSIDERATION OF THIS, HE URGED EMBASSY TO PRESSURE ATT TO RESTORE FULL SERVICE AND TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL THEY MADE TO ATT REP FENNESSY IN BRUSSELS LAST DECEMBER. ACCORDING TO NSIALA, ONPTZ PROPOSED TO INSTRUCT COUNTRIES WHICH OWED DEBTS TO ONPTZ TO CANCEL THOSE DEBTS BY PAYING ATT DIRECTLY. HE SAID THE ITALIAN PTT HAD ACCEPTED A SIMILAR ARRANGEMENT, BUT THAT AFTER SOME DELIBERATION ATT HAD REJECTED THIS SOLUTION. FYI: MONEY PAID BY OTHER COUNTRIES TO ONPTZ IS IMMEDIATELY CONVERTED TO ZAIRES. IN 1976 THE ONPTZ DIRECTOR REQUESTED THAT FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNED BY ONPTZ BE MAINTAINED IN A SEPARATE ACCOUNT WHICH ONPTZ COULD USE TO PAY OFF ITS FOREIGN DEBTS, BUT REQUEST WAS DENIED. THE DIRECTOR IS THINKING OF RENEWING HIS REQUEST IN LIGHT OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS. END FYI.

4. EMBOFF REMINDED NSIALA THAT EMBASSY HAD INTERVENED IN THE PAST TO FACILITATE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ATT AND ONPTZ, WHICH RESULTED IN POSTPONEMENT OF CURTAILMENT OF SERVICE. IN OCTOBER 1976 ONPTZ AGREED TO BEGIN PAYMENTS ON \$300,000 THEN OWED TO ATT (REF C). HOWEVER, ONPTZ FAILED TO MAKE PAYMENTS AND DEBT GREW TO AROUND \$500,000 BY END OF 1977, FORCING ATT TO SET NEW DEADLINE FOR JANUARY 1978. EMBOFFS WARNED ONPTZ OFFICIALS SEVERAL TIMES OF IMPENDING DEADLINE DURING LATTER MONTHS OF 1977 AND URGED THEM TO TAKE SOME ACTION TO AVERT CURTAILMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF SERVICE (RE B). CONSEQUENTLY, EMBOFF EXPLAINED TO NSIALA, EMBASSY WILL BE IN NO POSITION TO PRESSURE ATT TO RESTORE FULL SERVICE UNTIL ONPTZ PAYS AT LEAST PART OF ITS DEBT, WITH COMMITMENTS TO PAY ENTIRE DEBT. CUTLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TELECOMMUNICATION, GOVERNMENT DEBTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780361/aaaabzlv.tel
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Litigation History:
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